The Christian Family

A Study
in
Home Ideals

BY
CHARLES DARSIE

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The Christian Family

A Study in Home Ideals

By

CHARLES DARSIE

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1962

TENTH EDITION
Revised and Enlarged

The Bethany Press
St. Louis, Mo.

BV
4526
.D37
1924

35174

Copyright, 1924
Christian Board of Publication
St. Louis, Mo.

Printed in
The United States of America

Introduction

The first appearance of this book anticipated the present recognition of need for guidance in developing a wholesome, Christian, family life. It grew out of the author's work with a course, "The Christian Home," which was offered in the young people's summer conferences of the Disciples of Christ. The popularity of the course revealed a widespread interest in the subject and led to a demand for a textbook which would enable many other groups to study in this field.

Many books in this field have been written for parents only. This book is not so limited. As national director of adult work for many years and teacher in numerous young people's summer conferences, the author sensed the need for a study of the Christian family not merely for parents but for young people and married people without children as well. Therefore this book was prepared for all who are interested in the family and in Christian home life. Needless to say, it has influenced thousands of young people and helped them to higher ideals of family life. Many husbands and wives have found it to be a satisfactory guide in the development of a Christian home. Parents likewise have discovered in it a source of helpful information and guidance.

Mr. Darsie did not write from the standpoint of theory alone. What he wrote came out of experience in his home with his own family. He has faced the problems considered in his text.

Many classes of young people and adults will find this book a stimulating guide in a study of Christian family life. In the adult program now being developed emphasis is laid upon the use of elective units. This text is approved for use in the new list of electives. It deserves a wide use in adult classes. Young people have long since learned to use elective courses. This text will meet a need of many groups.

GLENN MCRAE,

Editor, Department of Young People's Literature,
Christian Board of Publication.

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And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.—Genesis 1:27, 28.[1]

And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.—Genesis 2:21-24.

I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.—Philippians 3:4-6.

The unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.—2 Timothy 1:5

But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—2 Timothy 3:14, 15.

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[1]The Scripture quotations throughout this volume are from The American Standard Revised Version, Copyrighted by Thos. Nelson and Sons, and are used by permission.

CHAPTER ONE

The Importance of the Home

The difference between a retreating and a triumphant Christianity is a thoroughly Christianized home life. Whenever the church gives the same attention to the marshalling of its families that it gives to the organization of its individuals, it will at once multiply its efficiency and stabilize its power. Christianity loses sufficient strength in each generation to complete the evangelization of the world.

Society is as its families

The family is the heart of society. Out from its throbbings flow currents of feeling, habit, and ideals which determine the quality of national and racial life. Here the world began; and here the world continues to begin, born anew with each generation. The prehistoric cave man is intelligible only when conceived in relationship to some kind of family. When we go to the Bible for light, we discover God crowning his creation by founding the family in the Garden of Eden to be thenceforth the creator of the race.

It would be most profitable for any minister to gather together annually all fathers and mothers of his church for the express purpose of reminding them that they are the creators of the future. Of all the membership they alone have the opportunity of perpetuating their ideals

in flesh and blood. The calling of parenthood is a great responsibility; but it is also a wonderful privilege. To begin a strategic family line is better than to inherit a noble name.

If individuals could be classified according to the ideals of their families, the result would be surprising. It would be hard to discern where the family left off and individuals began. Peculiarities of speech, ways of thinking, mannerisms, sentiments, and prejudices descend from parents to children with an influence that is as overwhelming as it is unconscious. Whether we magnify heredity or environment the conclusion is the same. In fact, environment is a continuation of heredity and could well be called spiritual heredity.

Accomplishments of families

The Scudder family is a striking example of what a single consecrated household may accomplish. Disregarding the fact that their decision brought with it disinheritance and loss of fortune, Dr. and Mrs. Scudder embraced the missionary enterprise. They deliberately adopted an ideal which impelled them to leave the comforts and society of New York City for the isolation and uncertainty of India. This ideal held for three generations. As a result the Scudder family in one century, from 1819 to 1919, was able to give 1,000 years of life service to India.[1]

Despite his boundless enthusiasm for Christ, Paul could not forget the influence of his family lineage and

[1] A. McLean, article in *World Call*, July, 1919, p. 28.

home training. We do well not to disregard it in our thinking. That Tarsus household gave to the world a son who could say that he was, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," found blameless. When Jesus needed "a chosen vessel to bear his name to the Gentiles and kings of the earth," he found such a one in a family that prided itself in being "of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

Many other families have like traditions. Many have adopted callings which descend from father to son. Law, and medicine, the ministry, teaching, business callings, skilled trades, military or sea-going life run through generations.

It was upon the faith of the third generation that Paul relied to combat the influence of "evil men and impostors that wax worse and worse." "Unfeigned faith * * * which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice," the faith which the world never stops to notice, by its transmission of spiritual personality saves the world when all else fails.

Transmission of ideals

Families supply their members with what may be termed ready-made emotions. Benjamin Kidd in *The Science of Power* attempts to show that even animals and birds transmit peculiarities by means of the strong emotion of their collective racial life.[2] Without regard to the scientific accuracy of Kidd's observations, concerning which there may be some difference of opin-

[2]Benjamin Kidd, *The Science of Power*, p. 248 ff. See also Kidd's whole discussion of the source of power in human affairs.

ion, there is no doubt that human families transmit attitudes and prejudices by the influence of example and shared feelings. Homes habitually contain an atmosphere of emotion. These loves, hatreds, religious scruples, fears, prides, and the like register more important effects upon character than all other agencies combined.

The tendency for members of a given family to belong to the same church is well known. They are also more apt than not to vote the same political ticket. Specialists in social science affirm that all movements in society are carried on tides of "social heredity."[3] Native capacities of individuals differ less than their inheritance of ideals. Civilization depends on the ability of one generation to transmit its highest and best idealism to succeeding generations. Thus the mind of man has been in the making ever since the dawn of history.[4] It is evident that it cannot continue to progress unless family influence can be co-ordinated and made a strong partner with other influences by which the future of the world is to be benefited.

In this process of transmitting spiritual endowment the family has never been secondary in importance. Society has come to feel its dependence upon the school system. Printed matter, music and pictures supplement the process. But no organization, device or plan can shift the center of power from the institution where God originally placed it. The home will always be strategic. Society would do well to look to the training of parents.

[3]Charles A. Ellwood, *Christianity and Social Science*, p. 16.
[4]James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in The Making*, p. 206.

The church also could double its influence within a single generation by teaching the art of Christian family leadership to its married members.

The Bible reveals God creating the first couple. From that time on the reproduction of the race and the transmission of spiritual vitality has been delegated to parents. Sin brought death; the Garden of Eden vanished. But there was a promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. By the divine gift of hereditary creative power, physical and spiritual, the Garden of Eden is to be replaced by the new Jerusalem, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The shortness of "life's little day" places limitations on every individual. We feel it keenly. No one wishes to die without making some significant contribution to the life of the world. But how small the opportunity in one lifetime! No sooner are we trained and experienced than we begin to die. To this difficulty the family furnishes the solution. Individuals are not self-made. The homes which produce them share the responsibility; also the credit for their achievements. By community of effort families may wield an influence out of all proportion to the ability of the individuals who compose them.

Families supplementing individuals

It is not by accident that the farm and the parsonage furnish most of our ministers and missionaries. They do so by means of the family attitudes which they maintain. On the other hand, by being a little less than Christian

in feelings and interests, the great majority of church homes cause the church to lose the services of some of her most promising young people. "Life's tempestuous sea" is not so apt to shut out the call of Jesus as is the insulation of family worldliness. Homes must maintain collective "unfeigned faith" to insure Christian life attitudes on the part of their children. The average church home has no such faith in evidence. By fearing to challenge its own children to the bigness of life investment in the Kingdom of God, the average church home loses half of them. It seeks to make their pathway smooth and their lot pleasant. In this way one generation is ever nullifying the faith of another.

Transmission of ideals vs. creed

It is more important for the home to transmit its ideals to its children than its creed. What matter if the creed be Christian, when the creed does not contain a trustworthy, impelling motive? If the motive be supplied, the children will find the creed for themselves. Except a home take up the cross it cannot make disciples of its own.

In addition, church life is home life transplanted to the large. The first churches were homes. This is the apostolic ideal. The early church met from house to house. Paul was ever addressing household churches. John in his first epistle spoke to "fathers" and "little children," while in the second epistle he addressed "the elect lady and her children." In every church there are certain homes which furnish its strength and decide

its policies. All of us can think of such homes. They give themselves without reserve. Their table talk is church talk. They entertain the church's guests. Literally the church lives in such homes. To double their number would be to double the size and power of the church. Why would it not be both Christian and efficient for the church to pay direct attention to the multiplication of such groups?

The Christianized home inseparable from the Christianized world

The Christianization of homes and the evangelization of the world are inseparable. "Unless the rest of society be Christianized, the Christianized family cannot survive in it."[5] On the other hand it is equally true that society cannot be Christianized unless the effort is supported by a more consecrated type of home life. Without a better home base the church will lose its fight.

The greatest mistake is to suppose that the home will look after itself. The "old-fashioned faith" was to a greater extent than we realize dependent on the "old-fashioned home." Neither the family nor the church have quite discerned what has happened to that home with modern changes in social and economic life. The Sunday school is unable to give the background for evangelistic appeal that the old-fashioned home supplied. No school can do it, least of all a school with meager equipment, limited time, and the vast majority

[5]Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing The Social Order*, p. 136.

of its teachers untrained. The church can only meet the situation by organizing a program, in which home life will furnish background for religious education and evangelism.

When a Catholic priest marries a couple, he tells them why they are married. They are married to found a Catholic home. If by any chance one member of the union happens not to be Catholic, he or she must promise that the children will be brought up in the church, and the home, as a home, be essentially Catholic. The priest goes on the assumption that his only reason for performing a marriage ceremony is to make another Catholic home. He reckons his membership, not by individuals, but by households.

In like manner a Jewish rabbi gives the contracting parties to a Hebrew marriage to understand that their union looks toward the propagation of the seed of Abraham and the transmission to future generations of the glorious traditions of the Hebrew race. The Jewish religion of modern times is racial. Only a small proportion of Jews in America belong to the synagogue. Jewish homes are the center of Jewish teaching. Without home influence the Children of Israel would centuries ago have been swallowed up in the ocean of world influences around them.

Unfortunately Protestants depend largely on formal church services to accomplish that for which the home is by nature fitted. Protestant ministers advise contracting parties in marriages which they perform to

"drop in at the church services." That is about all the advice they ever get. The rest is merrymaking and distracting confusion, old shoes and rice. We forget that those who are charged with the responsibility of organizing a new home not only have a right to the most serious and efficient instruction which the church can impart; but that they must have it if the church and the home are to work together.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. Do you know of church homes whose influence does not seem to be effective for Christianity? What could be done to make their good aggressive?

2. When Abraham Lincoln declared that he owed all that he was or expected to be to his sainted mother, did he mean to be taken literally? Do you think it true?

3. Why is it more important for church families to be organized on a Christian basis than for other church enterprises to be efficiently organized?

4. How can married people in the church be led to receive the help of the church in home arrangements?

5. Why are so many church homes uninteresting? Do you think it a part of Christian duty to make them attractive?

6. Why is Christianizing a home a positive enterprise rather than a program of prohibiting amusements and life practices?

7. What guidance does the Bible give for modern home life? Can its teachings be used to cover modern conditions which are different from the events of the age in which it was written?

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.—Luke 2:51, 52.

And there came a scribe, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.—Matthew 8:19, 20.

Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—Luke 10:38-42.

And every day he was teaching in the temple; and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called Olivet.—Luke 21:37.

God setteth the solitary in families.—Psalms 68:6.

They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: * * * * They are equal unto the angels.—Luke 20:35, 36.

CHAPTER TWO

The Home, What Is It?

The fundamental question for the members of a family to settle is whether they shall consider their home as an end in itself or a place in which to prepare for life. The answer to this question solves many problems that arise in the home. To state it another way, Is family success to be measured by family happiness, or shall we regard happiness as only a relative matter? Does the universe exist to support the home, or are homes successful to the degree that they prepare their members for and support them in the bigger tasks of life?

Is the home an end or a means to an end?

The issue is between happiness and service as the ideal; not that happiness does not serve or that service is not happy. In a sense both aims are legitimate. There can be no semblance of home without unselfishness on the part of its members. But the question to be solved is whether unselfishness shall expend itself upon the immediate circle of loved ones, or whether it shall carry with it a passion to make its contribution to the world. The family is the unit of society. Does society exist for its units, or do the units exist for the whole?

A normal family consists of father, mother and children. In such a relationship the strongest motives and

most sacrificial actions are centered in the welfare of the young and helpless members. At the base of the home impulse, therefore, is the desire to conserve immaturity and weakness until it develops into strength; but strength for what? Strength does not exist for itself but for the tasks of life. It must be quite evident that a family without a worthy purpose for its life must become eventually a Dead Sea that ever receives and never gives, thereby turning the freshness of its life into bitterness.[1]

Service the only Christian ideal

The protection, care and nurture of young lives carries with it the idea of their training for the varied situations and responsibilities of life. Inasmuch as life is a religious affair, this of course means religious training; and religion to the Christian means service. Even where there are no children the home must become a base for service activities. Otherwise it is not Christian. In most homes the possibilities for life at its best have not been reached. Love and loyalty furnish the quality of finer family life. They are at their best only when they are animated by the Christian ideal.

Cope says that the functions of the family are education and religion.[2] Weigle lists five functions: (1) biological, for the perpetuation of the race; (2) educational, for the mental, moral and spiritual perpetuation of the

[1]For origin of the family, see Willistine Goodsell, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 5 ff.

[2]Henry F. Cope, *Religious Education in The Family*, p. 46.

race; (3) moral, for the development of character; (4) social, to bring social control and social progress; and (5) religious, to produce Christian living and Christian worship.[3]

Jesus viewed the family as existing for earthly human society. It will not be needed in the world to come. It is not, therefore, an end in itself. To use the Master's words, "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. * * * They are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God."

The home as a base for life

The Master himself was prepared for life in a home, chosen for him by the Almighty. Within its modest walls Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Owing to lack of understanding on the part of members of his family our Savior carried forward his ministry without a home base. For some reason he never married. He once expressed his feelings by the words, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." When the strain of Passion Week was upon him, the Savior sought a home where he could retire from the conflicts of the day, and from which he could go forth to Gethsemane and the cross. We often fail to realize what that Bethany household meant to the Son of God.

Jesus did not think that the spiritual realities of life should be sacrificed to the routine of housekeeping.

[3]Luther Allen Weigle, *The Training of Children in The Christian Family*, p. 5 ff.

Said the Master, "That good part, which shall not be taken away from her, Mary hath chosen." Her ideal was different from that of her sister. Martha was cumbered with much serving. Mary made serving a means to an end. It was not that Mary was an idler. Luke states that she "*also* sat at the Lord's feet" (Luke 10:39). The word "also" would seem to indicate that both sisters served; but that Martha served for home's sake, while Mary made the home serve life and "the good part." Jesus said that Mary had the right idea.

A home with no end beyond itself cannot be happy. What Dewey says concerning happiness in the individual is likewise true of the family, "To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness."[4] Happiness is the by-product of our mission in life. Money can not buy it, nor thrift preserve it. Like the manna sent to the Children of Israel, it must be gathered every day.

The power house of life

The home must be thought of as the power house of life. Like the Sabbath it is for man, not man for the home. The home is the ante-room of life, where immortal beings gird themselves anew to do their best. When its members do their best, the home is successful. In its place as a power house it has three aspects:

1. *A physical power house.*—The home is a place of refuge and recuperation for the body. We go home to

[4] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 360.

rest and sleep, to eat and drink, to cleanse ourselves from the stain of toil. These needs are elemental. To have no place to lay one's head is to have no base for aggressive living. To be evicted from one's dwelling is the acme of helplessness.

It necessarily follows that the physical appointments of the home must be so arranged as to contribute effectively to health and usefulness. Many homes are the direct cause of physical inefficiency. The writer has a distinct recollection of visiting a home where a well-meaning wife informed him that her husband was always asking for toast, but that she preferred to give him fried potatoes. Almost in the same breath she deplored his habitual "stomach trouble." Many husbands fail to adequately provide for their wives because their wives fail to adequately care for them. They go forth, but half effective, prepared for only subordinate positions. Disordered digestion and undernourishment are responsible for many failures.

Some households are centers of ill health. A family is never really successful until it overcomes this handicap. Careful search should be made for the cause. Call in the family physician! It is better to pay doctor bills to keep us well than to cure our ills. The trouble may be in the ventilation, the drainage, or the water supply. Perhaps the conditions of sleep, the selection of food or the heating arrangements are at fault. When the defect is discovered and the remedy prescribed, no price is too great to pay for relief. No luxury is like good health, and no joy so great as that of physical efficiency.

The housewife should have the benefit of every resource to keep her home efficient. Modern improvements are constantly adding to the possibilities of the home as a physical power house. Cooking appliances and domestic labor saving machinery release home makers for larger opportunity and higher duties. We equip offices, farms and factories with machinery; why not the home? The home's product is life. That which increases life efficiency is service to God.

2. *A mental power house.*—The mind becomes exhausted as well as the body. Homes are to rest us from routine and responsibility. Happy is the person who can throw off worry with outer coat and hat. Home is a change of scene and interest. Habit and emotion combine to give it a peculiar joy. It is important that it contain that which will sharpen our wits and brighten our eyes.

We must not, however, forget that half of the family is employed in the home. How shall the tired wife find mental refreshment? Either the other members of the household must by their presence and conversation bring new phases of life to her, or expeditions to the outside world of society, amusement and religion be arranged. The important thing is to frankly recognize the necessity for mental relaxation and change. Every member of the family has the right to expect that the home will renew his interest in the business of living.

Modern life demands that nervous tension be relieved by some kind of recreation. Games are not idle when

rightly used. Picnics and parties, entertainments, outings, and vacations, all belong in the program of a home that is facing the duty of renewing the strength of its members. It is better to plan these things than to leave them to accident. The whole family should share as many of them as possible. What we do together is apt to become cleaner and saner for the unity engendered. Both young and old become more careful of their choice of recreation, when other members of the group are to share them. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"; but this is only half of the truth. The whole circle needs Jack to give it mental atmosphere. We stand or fall together.

The most subtle and possibly the most potent influences which affect mental life are those emanating from literature, music and art. Just as some homes weaken their members physically by improper living conditions, so others render a strong, optimistic mental attitude imposible by reason of the intellectual conditions that they engender. As a home thinketh, so is it. We breathe in ideals as we breathe air, according to that which is available; for we must breathe.

The family that enjoys "jazz" in music will be different from the one which enjoys classical selections. One great picture on the wall unconsciously colors the thinking of the household. A dozen cheap chromos have a different effect. In most homes the greatest mental influence is exerted by magazines and newspapers. They should be chosen thoughtfully and with a purpose.

There are many kinds. Sensational periodicals give distorted ideals of that which is important. Especially is this true when the reading matter is addressed to the sex appetite. There should be at least one review to give vision, sanity and power. And one more periodical should be added to make religion a part of family thinking.

3. *A spiritual power house.*—The highest type of power is spiritual, unseen and unmeasured by outward standards. We go home, most of all, for that indescribable something that makes home different from other places. The home believes in us, and we in it; that is faith—faith more vital than dogmas and creeds, and more refreshing to the soul. In the family circle we discover sincerity after varied experiences in a world which is given over to doubt and distrust. Such a renewal of our faith brings self-confidence and hope.

With faith comes the love that will not let us go. This is the love that makes "mother, home, and heaven," the three sweetest words in the English language. Home love grows by unselfish expression. It is strongest for the crippled child and the prodigal son. Others welcome us for what we bring; but home loves us for what we long to be. How could we live at our best without such love! There is wonderful power here.

Faith and love call for prayer. It is most natural for a home to express these qualities in worship. Too often, however, this worship is inarticulate. It is just thankfulness in our hearts for each other or apprehension for

what may happen apart from the protecting care of God. But whether expressed or not, the unselfish relationships which bind loved ones together are spiritual in their nature. They furnish the basis for sincere worship.

Home is the harbor for ships that gather there. They bring the wealth of the world into it; they take out that which the world can neither give nor take away. The ships go out to enrich the world and the harbor is for the ships. The most noble ship must have harbor somewhere. The ship cannot remain noble, if it exist but for the harbor. Neither is the harbor safe and good unless it keep its channel open to the ocean of life.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. In what ways may happiness in the home become detrimental to success in life?

2. On what grounds are governments justified in expecting families to give their bravest and best to the service of country?

3. How does the conception that the home is preparatory for life affect the idea that young people should defer marriage out of consideration for aged parents?

4. How much should the home sacrifice for the education of its children? Why?

5. Why has woman's sphere been confined to the home? Is this justified by Christian principles?

6. What effect will the conception that the home is the power house of life have on discord and contention between members of the family?

7. What items of conversation lead naturally to religious feelings and family worship?

8. Why should members of a family plan recreation for one another? What will happen if they do not?

9. To what extent does the reading of the average daily newspaper unfit the members of the family to enjoy higher types of reading?

So David removed not the ark unto him into the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittitite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months: and Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.—1 Chronicles 13:13, 14.

What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?—Mark 8:36.

The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.—Luke 16:8.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life.—Proverbs 4:23.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.—Matthew 5:13-16.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matthew 6:19-24.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.—1 Corinthians 1:25.

CHAPTER THREE

The Influence of a Central Motive

There is an old story of a farmer and his sons who one by one ran away from home and went to sea. Inasmuch as the family lived far from the sea and had never been interested in boats and ships, the farmer was at a loss to understand the conduct of his boys. One day the minister of the church pointed to a picture on the wall. It was the picture of a full rigged ship upon a shoreless ocean. The lure of the picture had been too strong for the boys. Its subtle suggestion had, unconsciously to all, become the dominant aim of the home.

Often we fail to realize the actual motive behind individual acts. Life has so many artificial coverings. Family life with its conventions and accumulated assumptions has an even greater complexity of motive. We go to church lest we should seem worldly to our neighbors; and we call it religious. We smile when visitors come. We ask them to call again, even though they have tired us until we wished them gone. We keep the front yard clean and take for granted that we love neatness, while the back yard is covered with ashes and tin cans.

Motives often obscure

It is not that our acts and attitudes are intentionally deceitful. Modern life is so overlaid with conventions

that it is easy to be misled by a superficial view. To understand an act we must comprehend its motives. Back of the conventions, conversations and habits of a home lies a family tendency, an impulse, a dominant aim. This impulse or aim means more than rules of politeness or professions of church membership.

More than we realize our individual lives are being moulded by certain desires, which become common to all members of the family. These family ambitions, if we can call them that, come to be major factors in the personal ideals of the several members of the household. This is the process by which civilization advances and one generation builds on the foundations, laid by preceding generations. If it is true that "the boy is father to the man," it is because the boy has shared so largely in the feelings and habits of his father. His after-life grows out of the mental attitudes acquired in his younger years. And the acquisitions of these younger years are largely determined by the dominant aim of the home.

If these dominant aims of society could be suddenly changed into something better and nobler, it can easily be imagined that a new race of human beings would result. The young would take up the new ideals as readily as the old have been assimilated in the past. It would appear that human nature itself had been changed. For human nature, as we commonly regard it, is mostly the ideals

Changed ideals mean a changed society

of the past as they are continually being acquired by the incoming generation. Every child passes under the influence of the feelings of the community in which he lives, and to a large extent thereafter he is not living an individual life, but a part of a common existence with all the circle of friends and acquaintances.[1]

The reason for the tremendous influence of this collective ideal is the central place which emotion and the instincts in which emotion is grounded have, in human nature. Back of all thinking lie feeling and instinctive impulses. These instinctive impulses are less restrained in early life. They are less restrained in the free contacts of the home circle also. And so it happens that the child is peculiarly susceptible to such ideals and motives as find a common expression in family conversation and attitudes.

It is easy to see, therefore, that these sentiments which the family first, and other circles of society second, pass almost ready-made to the individual, are of primary importance in creating the personality of the individual. Emotions are of necessity difficult to control. Individuals under the control of emotion are apt to be unreliable if not dangerous to themselves as well as to others. This vacillating quality of emotion is largely overcome in practical life by the stability of the collective sentiments of society. A stronger emotion enters into the life of the individual; stronger because universally felt and communicated by the members of the group of

[1]For a complete discussion of the influence of this collective inheritance, see Benjamin Kidd, *The Science of Power*, pp. 120-153.

which he is a part. And without the individual's knowing it, all his judgments, his attitude toward right and wrong, his longings and aspirations are mightily affected.[2]

The problem of civilization is therefore largely that of controlling the feelings of groups of people. It is much more complicated than that of common knowledge. We are not under the control of reason but of likes and dislikes. We can always find a reason for doing what we want to do. An apt illustration of this is the social attitude of native born white people in the United States toward the various races of the world. We all have been taught by our Declaration of Independence that "all men are created free and equal." Few of us, however, are greatly influenced by that bit of information. We inherit from the past a mass of prejudice in favor of our own race. This prejudice or habit of racial feeling makes it easy for us to invent reasons why native born American white people are superior to all others. We would still continue to feel that way, even though it could be logically proved to us that such is not the case.[3]

This is what made Cope say that training in domestic motives is more important than courses in domestic economy. Essentially the problem of modern civilization and Christianity is that of Christianizing people in such a way that they will feel and practice

Importance of training in motives

[2]See McDougall, *Social Psychology*, p. 159.
[3]See Charles A. Ellwood. *Christianity and Social Science*, p. 10.

two or three Christian motives together. Righteousness and truth, love and brotherhood, reverence and humility must be written in the feelings of human society. Modern inventions are good as far as they go; but modern religious emotions and aims have not kept up with the achievements of science. In consequence the younger generation always has in its possession more of physical power and advantage than it knows how to control. It is of the utmost importance that when people combine their lives in an institution as influential as a home that they be dominated by an adequate motive.[4]

There is certain to be one central aim in every family. Such aim should not be left to chance. The family, as a family, should make sure of its own sincerity. Unless the motives which we assume to be the ruling aims of our collective life do actually dominate its feelings, influencing even unconscious decisions and opinions, probably a baser motive is in control. So the supreme aim of the home should sometimes be discussed. It should be stated in words and tested by mature judgment. Is it adequate? Will it make our home a power house? It is worth praying over. It must be dignified until it in turn dignifies the whole circle.

Hocking says that changing human nature is a matter of changing wants or wills.[5] What the family comes to want more than all else, each individual grows up to desire. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of

[4]George F. Cope, *Religious Education in The Family*, p. 2.
[5]W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 148.

it are the issues of life." What shall it profit a family to gain the whole world and lose the ideals which constitute its soul?

A striking example of the influence of "wants and wills" is the influence of the Puritans in America. They are said to have been narrow and autocratic. They came out of persecution and religious warfare in England. Perhaps because of their lack of the feeling of sympathy they have failed to transmit many of their religious principles to their children after them. But as long as their ideals of purity and simplicity, equality and righteousness dominated their social feelings, such ideals influenced this country out of all proportion to the number of those who professed them. The Puritan home, and church, and state have become the ideal for America.

The Scotch are another example of a race where family ideals have played a prominent part in the progress of civilization. Wherever they have gone, and the Scotch have been great travelers, the rugged theology of their home life has made its impression. As Burns puts it:

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, revered abroad.
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God.'"[6]

Puritan homes and Scotch homes were the foundation without which Puritan and Scotch ideals could not be

[6] Robert Burns, "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

maintained. What families feel deeply will eventually become the spring of emotion for the community and the nation. It is not what people say they feel; but what actually shapes conversation and conduct. Whatsoever homes sow, that do they also reap; and their reaping is not for themselves alone, but for the world of which they are a part.

To discover the central motive of a home is the more important because it is often overlooked. Many times it is but a subtle suggestion, seldom or never expressed in words. It underlies, however, every important choice. A false ideal, like tuberculosis, is frequently slow in operation. It betrays us long afterward to our doom. We contend with alternating temptations and resistances, not realizing that the cause of the difficulty is deeper down and that the temptations of the moment are but symptoms. What is life's central motive? Home becomes shallow, sometimes vulgar. Members of the family care little for the faith of their fathers. Heads of the household find their own hearts growing cold with the love of the world. In a helpless way we seek to turn ourselves in another direction. It all seems like fate; but it is not fate. The central motive is wrong. We are contending against a force that is clutching at the soul.

Real causes often overlooked

On the other hand blessings multiply to the family that "seeks first the Kingdom of God." Members of such households, they know not how, discover secondary

results from such a motive. Life confirms the Savior's promise, "All these things shall be added unto you." Successful men and women in many fields of achievement come largely from homes dominated by Christian aims. Babson states that as a statistician he is compelled to say that ministers' sons are largely creating America today. He does not think that this is the result of a superior brand of piety. He is not altogether sure of their ethics. He only testifies that homes which are dominated by Christian aims furnish America with successful sons.[7] Ministers' and farmers' families furnish more leaders in industrial affairs than the families of bankers. The central motives work many surprisingly diverse results.

So it is highly desirable that a home make its aim clear and satisfactory. What we do together gets a certain sanctity. It eventually makes itself felt in important life decisions. Such choices, while often made individually, are at the same time predecided, predestined as it were, by the dominant aim of the home. The importance, therefore, of such an aim justifies a family in consciously paying much attention to its selection.

The vice that lurks in virtue

Of all motives which undermine higher purposes the most seductive are those that grow out of interests, harmless and often worthy in themselves. Beginning as virtues they become vices by being given the central place in our affection. Take, for in-

[7] See Roger W. Babson, *Fundamentals of Prosperity*, p. 30.

stance, that most excellent family virtue, thrift. How valuable it is! To save us from prodigality, to give us poise and self-respect, to conserve "plain living and high thinking," how necessary it is! But how easy it is to allow this quality, which is a virtue, when treated as a means to a more worthy end, to become an end in itself! When thrift grows into avarice, it brings the doom of the money loving home. Not only can we not serve God and mammon, but we cannot learn to love mammon and continue to love and live for each other. Heartbreaking contests over family property but advertize the fact that worldly wise business arrangements lead to the bankruptcy of all that constitutes life.

In other homes we find such good things as friendship and hospitality growing into a craze for society. In the end they defeat their original purpose. So-called social life becomes but another name for selfishness. Gluttony and pride supplant real regard, while the superficial character of it all leaves little of personal worth to make friendship fruitful. Friendship should have led to the strong and worth while purposes of life. Instead, by itself becoming a purpose it robbed nobler purposes of their power.

Avarice and social pride are but examples of a great number of most excellent secondary interests that become vices when made the focus of interest. They are not valuable enough to be made central. They are but temporal, while life is eternal. It is fatal to live for anything less than eternal life. The central aim is the

soul of a home. All else is secondary. Just as life is more than meat and the body than raiment, so homes cannot serve God and mammon. For homes have souls.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. Give examples of family or individual decisions that reveal a false central aim for the home.

2. How would the aim of material success work out in individual decisions by members of the family?

3. What kind of homes are produced by those whose central aim is education and culture?

4. How can we prevent motives of secondary value from becoming central in family life?

5. How can we overcome false aims that may be presented to the household from the outside world?

6. In what form, to avoid "preaching," should we couch our petitions to God for guidance in keeping family aims pure?

7. State in words a unifying motive for a Christian family that would be adequate to idealize life.

As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.—Joshua 24:15.

If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.—Matthew 5:46-48.

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matthew 5:20.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.—Galatians 2:20.

Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?—Mark 8:35, 36.

While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.—Matthew 12:46-50.

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.—Genesis 18:18, 19.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Aim of a Christian Home

Some nights ago we were invited to a Golden Wedding anniversary. The couple had married when the community was young and times were rude. Education had been limited by conditions obtaining in the rough log schoolhouse. This fact, as is so often the case in America, had not limited opportunity for success in life.

Children and grandchildren were at the anniversary. In the providence of God not one had been taken from the circle. Best of all, they were in the church, professing Christians. It was fitting that the anniversary celebration should be held in the church parlors. The church had been to them a unifying influence and a central motive for fifty years, during which time they had grown from two souls to two score.

After the congratulations of the invited guests came the personal testimonies of the members of the family. Three granddaughters sang a greeting. A son-in-law voiced the feelings of the children. Last of all the grandfather spoke. It is not possible to reproduce all that he said; but one fact stood out. They had throughout the years put God first in their family life. Not denominationally united at the beginning of their married life, the couple had nevertheless agreed that they must unify the religious spirit of their home. They

joined a common church. Their children after them, as fast as they married, did likewise. The result was not denominational unity in the family; but Christian unity and purpose. And God had abundantly blessed them for three generations.

Such a family meeting is the very best plea for a Christian family aim that can be presented. There they were, in flesh and blood, living illustrations of the Savior's promise that all necessary things shall be added to them that seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. They had put that kingdom first. As a result the family had been able to transmit its Christian aim unimpaired from generation to generation. And God had added health and wealth, education and culture. None had died; none were poor; education and culture were manifest.

The aim makes a family Christian

That which makes a family Christian is a common, unifying, Christian aim. When an individual becomes a Christian, he proceeds to unify his life around a central motive. This is the meaning of faith, repentance and obedience to the gospel. This must happen also in a family that desires to become Christian. Such a home must have a change of heart. It must save its life by losing it. It goes without saying that the members of the household will be members of a church. They will be active members. The finances of the family will be administered in the sacrificial spirit. But only time and talents express the central passion. Conversion in the individual means a

shifting of interest.[1] In the family it can mean nothing less than that the group is living to glorify God.

In what respect does a Christian home differ from one that is not Christian? Many demand that Christians shall become a "peculiar people" with the emphasis on "peculiar." By peculiar they mean eccentric. Jesus never seems to have desired his disciples to become eccentric. He came "eating and drinking" and desired his disciples to do likewise.

Others emphasize the testimony of Paul that he had become "all things to all men." And by this too often they mean that the Christian profession will make little difference in conduct or attitude. Manifestly no religion can be significant which makes no difference. There must be a difference; but it must be the Christian difference of purpose and passion. As Paul expressed it concerning himself, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Danger of conventional Christianity

Average church families are dangerously like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. They are cultured and respectable. They are prominent in the church and in the community. They love their friends and obey the laws of the land. But Jesus remarked that even the publicans and sinners do that. All this put together does not make a home Christian. A

[1]See Theodore G. Soares, *A Study of Adult Life*, p. 25.

Christian family must seek to make a Christian contribution to the world. They must at times talk about their purpose. They must make it the main thing. The leading question of such a home will not be how to make its children's pathway smooth, but how to send them forth to bless the world. The home that is willing to sacrifice to be a blessing, and only that kind of a home is Christian. Other homes may be happy, or cultured; but they are not Christian.

Jesus is very clear on this point. No one can be his disciple who is not devoted to bringing in the Kingdom of God. His heaviest denunciations were directed to the respectable scribes and Pharisees. They were hypocrites, actors. They cared for their own; but they despised others. Kingdom relationships supersede other relationships in Jesus' teaching. "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? and he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:48, 49).

Ideals that do not save the young

It is the most tragic thing in modern church life that half of our homes are losing their children from the circle of the saved. They are unable to transmit their Christian ideals and emotions to the younger generation. It is more important that ideals and emotions be transmitted than formal creed. The children will find the creed if they feel the power of the aim. It is the judgment day of a church home when

family history reveals that there has not been enough of shared idealism and Christian aim to carry over into the lives of its children. They are living for something else. What shall it profit a home to gain the world and lose its own children?

We are now ready for the statement that a large number of church homes are generous enough to be cultured, but too selfish to be Christian. They are kind to each other, but indifferent to the needs of the world that makes their existence possible. Privacy and comfort have shut out the neighborhood, the nation and the ends of the earth from their lives. They are glad to receive God's gifts, provided they are not required to take an interest in his children.

The tides of the world

To keep the harbor of such family life clean from its own selfishness, the tides of the world must ebb and flow through its common emotions. Finally spirit and love can go only part of the way toward family redemption. It eventually requires a universal motive to bring eternal life.[2] The members of a Christian family are not intended to be satisfied with a narrow circle, however perfect that circle may be. They will inevitably break its bounds and transcend its plans. Unless the family circle has made itself a part of God's great world, the members of that circle are very apt to consider themselves outside the Father's love and keeping. To repeat what has been said above, one-half the

[2]See Charles A. Ellwood, *Christianity and Social Science*, pp. 74-79.

homes of the church are losing their children from the circle of the saved.[3]

Many homes are saved or lost with the first motive of the marriage which begins them. America is shocked at the extent of its own divorce problem. Remedies proposed range from the prohibition of divorce to stringent restrictions on the right to marry. It is not the purpose of this treatise to discuss the divorce evil; but the suggestion is made that motives for married life be made stronger and more enduring. The fact of the case is that homes cost too much to be profitable unless the motives of them be spiritual and eternal. When a couple marry to please themselves, they speedily discover that marriage has not pleased them sufficiently to continue its drudgery. Only when marriage means the opportunity to express the deepest longings of the soul in expression that will glorify God and bless mankind can two human beings expect to be satisfied with its restrictions.[4]

Motives in marriage

Manifestly such expression cannot become an incident in a life of pleasure-seeking or wealth accumulation. It must mean the dedication of that which is most personal and most dear. Gifts of money will neither pay our debt to God or satisfy the desires of our hearts. Money is only life's symbol. Jesus paid scant attention to the gifts of the rich. The only rich man who desired

[3] See George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, p. 215.

[4] See Henry F. Cope, *Religious Education in The Family*, chapter 1.

to enroll among the disciples was instructed to divest himself of his riches and consecrate his personality. Homes lose their souls when they lose their ideals.

The Christian home reaches its climax in well-born, equipped and consecrated children. To such children is bequeathed a nobility, transmitted more by faith than by the flesh. That family is noble which leaves the world better for its continuance. Most family lines would not be missed, were they to end. Significant heredity is social and spiritual.

"Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation," said Jehovah, "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah." That which made the Hebrew nation also made its religion. Religions grow by families and families grow by their religious life. Churches whose homes do not dedicate themselves as homes to the Kingdom of God are destined to fail. Their homes will also fail; they will stand or fall together. It is one of the most important events of life, much more important than the winning of wars or the election of rulers, when a home unitedly says, in the words of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."

Questions for Class Discussion

1. To what extent are we justified in sacrificing family finances to the service of the world?

2. What proportion of those who take up altruistic vocations are influenced in their choice by family ideals?

3. What contribution will a Christian aim make to the happiness of a home?

4. What has happened when the service of God does not bring joy to the family?

5. By what method can we influence other members of the family to share our feelings and purposes concerning Christianity?

6. What are the considerations that should influence a Christian in the choice of a life vocation?

7. Is the principle, "By their fruits ye shall know them," applicable to the home? Can we conclude that a home is not Christian when it fails to keep its own members strong in their Christian profession and faith?

8. What was the aim of the home of your childhood and youth?

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.—Philippians 2:5-8.

Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies.—Ephesians 5:22-28.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.—Ephesians 6:1-4.

And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God.—Mark 10:13, 14.

One is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ.—Matthew 23:8-10.

CHAPTER FIVE

Home Atmosphere

A home is like a barn in having four walls and a roof. Like a hotel it provides meals and sleeping accommodations. But what neither barn nor hotel can furnish is a certain type of personal relationships. The fine art of home making consists largely in the ability to successfully maintain such relationships. Humanity has its ideal as to how the members of a family should dwell together. No home can be called successful where such ideals are not recognized and allowed to influence conduct. A fine type of friendship must be maintained; if by accident it is lost —and accidents happen in the best regulated families— it must be restored.

The fine art of making relationships

On the most famous street of one of the larger cities of the country stands a splendid mansion. It has imposing walls and spacious, well-kept grounds. It is reputed to have the richest interior decorations and furnishings in all that wealthy and aristocratic quarter. But as a home this modern palace is a failure. Unfortunately its owner and his wife have come to feel that they cannot live together under any roof, however splendid. When one of them enters the mansion, the other leaves. Divorce alone will end this intolerable situation.

On the other hand, in the same city, thousands of families are living successfully. They are handicapped financially; but it is proverbial that the cottage holds more love than the palace. This is probably not because it is a cottage. The palace frequently holds a great deal of love. But the flat frequently brings its occupants more joy than the stylish apartment because the quality of life in the former is Christian. Nowhere more than in family life is it truer that "all that glitters is not gold."

Home success, therefore, depends on spiritual conditions. Even a permanent abiding place is not essential. Many families move from house to house with great frequency without sacrificing the home spirit. Ministers of the gospel are conspicuous for their removals from place to place without losing from their family circles the real values of life.

Of course the Christian aim of a home is a large factor in securing this spiritual atmosphere. Where the common purpose is to make a Christian contribution to the world, such purpose reacts on the relationships of the hearts that hold it. Nevertheless many families miss the most effective realization of their aim because they do not see that the spirit is more important than the letter of the law. In order to realize our highest purposes the emotional attitudes that we assume in our work must be in accord with the spirit of such ends.

Place of family aim

The place where the teachings of Jesus first touch

home atmosphere is in the Master's insistence upon the rights of personality. He insisted that the weak, the helpless, and especially the little ones, should be respected. Their angels are permitted to behold the face of the heavenly Father. To such belongeth the Kingdom of God. In the long view of life, even fatherhood carries with it no superiority. One is our Father, even he who is in heaven. All who belong to the human family are thereby members of God's family and as such are entitled to respect.

Respect for personality

This fundamental prerogative of a human being cannot with safety be overlooked. For the individual to overlook it means everlasting death. For social groups to forget it is the death of their common spiritual life. Enemies are to be loved; the welfare of others is to be treated as though it was our own; we must not despise or treat with contempt; to say, "Thou fool," is to be in danger of hell fire.

We all know that the world is full of those who doubt the practical value of the Sermon on the Mount in human affairs. They will only be convinced by an actual demonstration. The home is the place where such demonstration can be given. The instincts that bind us together in the family make it possible, not only to love each other as we love ourselves, but also to respect the opinions and aspirations of the young and inexperienced, which

The natural place to practice Christianity

is often more difficult. In a normal family no son becomes too great a prodigal to come home again and no child too frail to be worthy of sacrifice.

Unfortunately, however, other strong human impulses mingle with those of which we have been speaking. Selfishness creeps in from the outside world of strenuous competition. The family is naturally socialistic in character; to each according to his needs and from each according to his ability. But lust and cruelty tend to disregard the welfare of the "little ones, whose angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." Even more often, arbitrary ideals of government, held over from a bygone age, make despotism persist in the home long after it has been banished from the state. The outstanding sin of despotism is its disregard for personality.

To what extent can the American principle of democracy and the Christian doctrine of respect for personality be applied in the home? Will conditions permit the extension of self-government to the less experienced members of the family? Age and experience impose the obligation to protect the young from their own immaturity. Where does this necessity become an excuse for selfish tyranny? Do the children of a home have to come to the age of economic self-support before they can have a voice in their own affairs? Shall they be indirectly encouraged to resort to duplicity and secrecy in order to obtain their own way? Or can some arrangement be made in the modern home whereby all

will feel that they are sharing in the privileges, the responsibilities, and the determining influences, with the result that the family shall act as a unit and common motives be transmitted in a free Christian, democratic atmosphere.

The home cannot be the power house of life unless each member of the family is assisted to achieve the highest degree of self-realization. To this end the feelings of self-respect even of the humblest must not be injured. Opinions must be treated with consideration; opinions which are often far from wise and impossible of adoption. It is the person, not the opinion, which must be respected. Modern civilization does not permit cruel physical conditions for the young and helpless. Unfortunately it is still possible to maintain attitudes in home life that stifle ambition and quench the spirit.

Self-realization

What then should be the method of family government? The wishes of a baby must often be disregarded in the interest of his welfare. Who can say when immaturity ends and wisdom begins? The extent to which Christian democracy may be applied to the home is probably a relative matter, varying in different situations. But as fast as the spiritual atmosphere of the home will allow, every child should be made a real citizen of it. The broader the range of citizenship, the more Christian the spirit of the home. Each member of the family will share in family laws and arrangements. The laws, once made, will be respected by old and young alike.

Penalties, if penalties be needed, will be recognized as just and fit because mutually understood. There will be no confiscation of property without due process of law. Why should the parent take from the child by reason of his strength what justice and common necessity allows?

In a modern world these things are inseparable from respect for personality. The Spirit of God will not bless any lower standard. To use the words of George Albert Coe, "The only kind of punishment that can teach real obedience is punishment that is itself obedient and that does not separate the child from the family, but rather binds him to it through mutual sympathy."[1]

Money matters

More families lose their collective soul over money matters than in any other way. As the members grow older there comes wrangling and bitterness; eventually lawsuits and contests over wills, until family feeling gets to be only bitterness of spirit. The beginnings of such bitterness go back to a lack of partnership in the early days of the home. It can hardly occur where all are allowed to understand the financial arrangements of the family and are given a voice in the plans that have so much to do with their collective happiness.

Family budgets are not only advisable for the sake of economy, but vitally necessary in the creation of a common purpose and an unselfish spirit. It is useless to complain of thoughtlessness or selfishness on the part

[1] *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 274.

of the members of the family, when such members are not allowed to know so much as the amount of the family income or to feel the responsibility of its administration. We have only to imagine the effect on the individual, who feels that what he spends has little or no relation to that which the others enjoy. Fairness and frankness pay financial dividends. The dividend of cooperative, Christian personality is even more important.

Service and sacrifice

The same principle holds good with regard to service and sacrifice in the home. Competition may dominate the world of commerce; but when competition dominates a home, the outcome will be strife. Partnership and mutual understanding must supply the motives for generosity and helpfulness. Aside from efficiency of arrangement it makes for happy relations for every member of a family to have his task in the household, a task that has been mutually agreed upon and not arbitrarily imposed.

Dignifying our homes

Respect for personality is also heightened by dignifying everything that has to do with common interests and activities. Avoid that which cheapens life. Without becoming artificial or formal families should seek for themselves the best of table conversation, manners and attitude. When guests come, how do the members of the family speak of one another? What form of entertainment do they provide for their company? Many families persistently degrade their own common life

They delight in that which leads to no dignity of relationships.

At the same time it is a serious mistake for the ideals of the home to be dictated by the older and more serious minded members of the family. The children and young people are entitled to live their lives without disregarding the legitimate customs of the circles in which they move outside the home. When a child is compelled to wear clothing that makes him look ridiculous to his playmates, his self-respect is lowered to satisfy the self-will of his parents. When the youth is forbidden social enjoyments and amusements, it becomes necessary for him to choose between disobedience, deception, and repressing his natural inclinations for happiness. The point is that the whole circle should move together in its ideals.

It would be quite easy to formulate a list of "Thou shalt nots," but the ideal is quite different. The old-fashioned family is not necessarily the most Christian. Jesus came that his followers might have life; and life is associated with co-operative choices, enthusiasm, joy, and growth. The atmosphere of a home is made by the relationships of free children of God. It is the air that the family must breathe. Its character will determine the success of the family aims much more than good advice or strict commandments. Many homes mistake Puritanism for Christianity. The atmosphere of a Christian home is like the spirit of him who counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be

grasped, but emptied himself and became obedient even unto death. Such a spirit is not communicated by stern commandment but by shared motives.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. Why is the Sermon on the Mount more effective in moulding conduct than the Ten Commandments?

2. What goes to make a happy day in a home?

3. Why is Christian leadership more apt to come from happy homes than from sad ones?

4. How can recreation be made to contribute to character formation?

5. What effect will a clash of will between husband and wife have on home atmosphere? What is the Christian solution of such a difficulty?

6. In making a family budget what proportion of the income should be set aside for culture? for recreation? for strictly religious uses?

7. How should the home deal with weakness, foolishness or sin on the part of members of the family?

8. How can the atmosphere of harshness be changed to that of faith and love?

9. What is the weakness of a habit of criticism in family conversation?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.—Luke 10:27.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?—Matthew 6:24-30.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.—1 John 4:20.

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.—Philippians 4:4-9.

CHAPTER SIX

The Recognition of God

How do families become religious? This is a different question from that which has to do with family worship. It is a much more important question.

Religion the total approach to God

Religion in the home is the sum total of the family approach to God; the family altar is but one of the methods by which that approach is made. Many homes have been religious without daily prayer together. When Burns described "The Cotter's Saturday Night" he was not attempting a description of every night. Throughout the poem we are conscious that the home worshiped because it was religious; it did not become religious by its worship. (See note at bottom of page 34.)

Let us defer the discussion of family worship to the end of the chapter, commencing here with that phase of religious life discussed in the last chapter. How shall we love God, whom we have not seen, until we learn to reverence those members of the family, whom we see every day? A recognition of the sacredness of personality is the beginning of religion. Just as we often come to know the mature members of a family by cultivating the acquaintance of the baby, so we come naturally to God by remembering that our

Sacredness of personality

loved ones are his children. Once human personality has come to have a sacred significance it is not difficult to recognize God. From the love of a brother to the heart of the Father is a simple transition.

Jesus taught that the atmosphere of prayer was that of faith and harmony. "Have faith in God"; "Whenever ye stand praying forgive"; "Be at peace one with another"; "Be not anxious for your life"; "Your heavenly Father knoweth"; these are the conditions of prayer. The Master had little to say concerning the forms of supplication.

Hospitality and neighborliness are but extensions of that regard for human personality that leads to religion.

Hospitality and neighborliness

"Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). Every guest is an angel when the motive for his entertainment is Christian. Every neighbor becomes a means of grace. Our guests and our neighbors are opportunities of enlarging our vision, not only by their detached viewpoint but also by enlarging our sympathies. We grow by sharing.

A third means of grace is the opportunity of the family to plan and execute Christian enterprises. These may or may not be connected with the church; but to transmit Christian impulses they must be impulsive. Search should be made for those projects that are worthy of sacrificial devotion. Once found, the

Common Christian enterprises

whole family should be enlisted in their whole-hearted accomplishment. We can do more to introduce our loved ones to Christ in one Christly enterprise than in many words of preaching. The class room and the pulpit have an advantage in giving formal instruction; but the home is the place where common enterprises can transmit Christian purpose.[1]

The world is full of homes where children grow up with pious parents, only to live godless lives because they have never shared the deep sense of adventure that the older generation had in Christian achievements. It requires the sense of partnership to instil motives. Here we also find the place of the church in home religion. The church is the home's greatest benefactor. Few of us would be content to live where there were no churches. Even nominal membership dignifies and enriches the home; but when the work of the Kingdom of God makes demands upon the collective time and financial strength of the home circle the result is such a mutual sharing of religious feeling as to make Christianity vital. Tithing and stewardship, with actual church work, are not mere optional matters when a home would make sure of its Christian quality.

Individual consecration

Naturally, this shared religious feeling must originate in the individual consecration of one or more members of the household. They are the salt of the earth; if they lose their savor, wherewith shall the remainder of the household

[1]See George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, p. 223.

be salted? It is impossible to deceive our own loved ones concerning our actual interest in Christianity. They will unconsciously feel our real attitude. There is something wrong with the religious enthusiasm that does not cause the rest of the family to feel the glow. The fault may be in the sincerity of it; or it may be in its legalistic deadness. But to be genuine it must be shared. The sharing is what makes the home religious.

The Bible

How can we make the Bible a living book? Not by exhorting people to read it. To live, the Word of God must be interesting; that is, it must have a direct bearing upon that which we value in life. Cope lists seven ways in which the Bible may be made a part of family life; (1) By using the Bible personally; (2) by using it naturally, as though it were any other good book; (3) by making its use a pleasure, the Bible story a reward for good conduct or a treat on a special occasion; (4) as a book of life to decide practical questions that arise in the family; (5) its use in worship, short passages, intelligently explained; (6) by providing material to make the Bible interesting; and (7) by making it available for all, having it at hand in readable type, in the room where the family spends its time.[2] It is needless to add that the Bible is necessary to Christianity and its use to a Christian home.

The love of God's Word can be put into the heart of

[2]Henry F. Cope, *Religious Education in The Family*, pp. 120-123.

little children by the practice of telling Bible stories. No child ever forgets mother's bedtime stories. Every experience is a story to a little child; and every story is an experience, a tremendous adventure. Parents could almost remake the world by acquiring the art of story telling and then using the proper stories. By thus moulding the imagination of the child, the whole background of his life is changed and made definitely Christian. In the process the parents will be astonished at the transformation made in their own lives.

Bedtime stories

What Bible stories are to the little ones, religious conversation comes to be to those who are older. It is the final step necessary to make family worship easy and natural. There should not be so much embarrassment about speaking of religion. Why should it be easier to preach a sermon or teach a class than to exchange experiences with a loved one? Members of a family should talk about their religion. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." It may begin with remarks concerning the announcements or the public services of the church. It should not, however, stop there. Often in the evening of the Lord's Day, when hearts are opened by that which is happy and natural, members of a household can strengthen each other's spirits in a way impossible for formal worship.

Religious conversation

Through it all, let it never be forgotten that religion is communicated by sharing, not by donating. Husband

and wife, parents and children must share freely their finest and best. Let not either despise what the other has to bring to the common ideal. Youth, and even ignorance, have some surprising contributions to make. By working, obeying, and playing together a united religion is established. And in this process nothing can take the place of free conversation.[3]

Family worship

After what has been said, little remains to mention concerning family worship. It should grow naturally out of respect for personality, the spirit of neighborliness and hospitality, common Christian enterprises, individual consecration and Bible study, and family conversation. When once the family is able to speak to one another about God, it will not be difficult to speak to God concerning one another. The real difficulty about family worship is that we do not approach it naturally. The danger is not that so many homes have no family altar; but rather that there would be nothing vital in family prayers, if the family observed them.

Family worship should not be an imitation of a church service. It should not, in any event, convey the impression that religion is dull and uninteresting. There should be neither long faces, long lessons, nor long prayers. Christians do not enjoy dullness any more than other people. All the happy, informal, "homey," personal interests should find their way into the prayer. In every way that it is possible the family altar should

[3] See George Albert Coe, *Education in Religion and Morals*, pp. 275-277.

be made the part of home life that is longest remembered and anticipated. It should dignify in an institution all the best for which the family stands.

Family worship is usually practiced in two forms: grace before meals and a set time during the day or evening when the Scriptures are read and prayer offered. It is a little thing for a family that believes in God to stop and thank him at the beginning of every meal. But the effort to establish a family altar encounters three difficulties.

Three difficulties

The first difficulty is to find time for it. In the rush of American life we too often cannot find time to become acquainted with one another, to say nothing of stopping to pray together. The best time for family worship is at one of the meals. There is usually one meal of the day when the family stops to visit for a little time. If there is not such a meal in your home, there should be. During this visiting time is the place for your worship.

Be brief! One verse is enough at first. A few verses when no one feels hurried are better than a long passage with even one wishing to get away to another engagement. Rather a sacred moment than a hysterical half hour. The prayer should not be longer than the Scripture lesson. Jesus taught that we are not heard for our much speaking. It is not seemly to speak to God at greater length than we permit him to speak to us.

The second difficulty is to know what to read and

what to pray for. There are several answers to this difficulty. Forms of worship may be used. There are several good books of devotion, written especially for family prayers. Write to your favorite religious publishing house. In planning family worship do not let it become monotonous. Vary the service. Get different members of the family to take part in it. Even the youngest can learn to say a prayer for the group. Above all else, get the longings, the problems, and the feelings of the family into the prayer. Call the members of the family by name. Ask wisdom to solve family problems. Let family worship grow out of family conversation.

The third and greatest difficulty is that of getting started. We are not used to the sound of our own voices in prayer. A peculiar, almost instinctive reticence holds us back. We fear that our practice will not be in accord with our religious profession. Isaiah confessed that he was a man of unclean lips. So we feel, though we are not so ready to confess it. How shall our lips be touched with a coal from off the altar?

This difficulty is largely one of religious modesty. The need for worship must break it down. Your family will not be perfect in its love of God without some expression of that love in worship. You must have it to dignify all the deeper feelings that bind loved ones together. It may help you to get used to the sound of your own voice to pray aloud in your private devotions. It may help to commit a short prayer to memory. There will be no permanent help, however, unless you begin

family worship. Call the circle together and begin. Do not put it off! You may have delayed too long already.

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, family religion is as broad as family life. The home is a sacred place where God is. We only need to have spiritual eyesight; which means that we remember in all that we do the Creator of every good and perfect thing. We are his and he is ours. It would be dangerous to try to live without his eye upon us and his arm to save us. There are no accidents possible in a home where God guards the portal. Even death is not an accident that he can not make right in his own good time. To be Christian your home must recognize the Father's care.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. In which of the various ways mentioned in this chapter is it easiest and most effective to introduce religion into the family?

2. How did you begin family worship in your home? Testimonies will help others.

3. What subjects should be introduced into family prayers?

4. How can little children take part in worship?

5. How can we help those who have grown up without ever having prayed in the presence of others?

6. Is there danger that members of the family may give too much time to the church? How much time should they give?

7. What effect will tithing have on the members of the family?

8. How can neighborliness and hospitality be given a religious significance?

9. To what extent is trust in God necessary to a Christian home? Is it always a sin to worry? Or what did Jesus mean by forbidding his disciples to take anxious thought?

10. With what topics can religious conversation be introduced into family conversation?

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.—Romans 12:1.

And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? trying him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh: so that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And . . . the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.—Mark 10:2-12.

That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.—1 Corinthians 15:46, 47.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.—Genesis 1:26-28.

And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.—Luke 20:34-36.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Physical Nature of Human Beings

Thus far we have been dealing with home ideals that have to do with motives and feelings apart from the physical nature of human beings. Many of us would prefer not to consider anything else. To do so would be to lose sight of actual conditions. Motives and feelings do not exist apart from the body. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual."

Two dangers

There are two dangers in the experience of marriage; being content with the physical without attempting to discover the spiritual meaning of life, and attempting the spiritual without reckoning with the physical. The fact that families begin with the union of two persons of opposite sex indicates a basic physical attraction. A recent survey of one hundred cases of divorce in a large and representative American city disclosed the surprising fact that, back of the formal complaints lodged with the court, the real cause of the failure was, in ninety-seven of the hundred, sex antagonism. It is scarcely possible to obtain harmony, much less Christian attitudes, without a wise management of sex feeling.

Marriage is the greatest adventure that the majority of human beings experience. The essence of adventure

lies in unexpected difficulties and surprising satisfac tions. Wedded life abounds in both. The real romance of married life cannot be told in books. It begins, if at all, after the wedding, not before. Our health, our wealth, our friendships, religion, our souls, all are brought to the marriage altar. Whether we know it or not they are brought sacrificially to become our investment in a supreme adventure. Marriage is not a lottery; that is too tame a word. It is the adventure of a lifetime.

As in any adventure fact and fancy, imagination and reality, the physical and the spiritual are combined.

Two essential instincts

The family as an institution has back of it two fundamental tendencies; sex and the parental instinct. All the romance of it, the unexpected difficulties and the surprising satisfactions, are intimately associated with these two tendencies. God thus laid the foundation of the family, both physical and spiritual, in the nervous organization of two human beings, who were created for each other. Society has been loath to define the nature of the attachment which draws a man and a woman together. We cover our embarrassment about the subject with jokes and pleasantries. But the practice of ignoring sex is neither sensible nor scriptural.

Naturally there can be little hope from married life where the instinctive tendencies on which marriage depends are not normal. Statistics, long suppressed by the conventions of society, now reveal the ghastly fact

that a large per cent of disorders, requiring abdominal surgery, have as their primary cause, tainted blood and abnormal sex life. No statistics are available to show how many marriages fail of success because of deficient sex nature. But sane emotional and intellectual conditions, such as are necessary for spirituality and culture in the home, can hardly be obtained without a normal man and woman for husband and wife. The first step, therefore, in beginning a Christian family is to make sure that one's body is fit and worthy to be used of God in this relationship.

The primary purpose of the family

The chief end of married life is the birth and rearing of children. "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:27, 28). In the next world, according to Jesus, there is no need of marriage. "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35, 36). This seems to imply that God has committed the act of creation of human lives to families as their chief function.

Childless homes, therefore, are not normal. They have missed the primary function of a home. By this we do not mean that such homes are necessarily blame-

worthy. Rather, they are handicapped. If they cannot have children of their own, they would do well to adopt some child; better still, two children. The condition to be remembered is that the parental instinct together with sex are most prominent factors in the physical basis of a spiritual home. For two healthy young people to marry without the intention of having children is essentially unnatural and unchristian. They spoil the first experiences of their love and render selfish and animal that which should be sacrificial and spiritual.[1]

Secondary significance of sex

Another and most necessary factor in the success of a family is nervous balance and harmonious emotional conditions. Here the spiritual is built upon the physical. It is impossible to maintain an optimistic and helpful disposition without a normal stomach and liver. It is impossible to think clearly if the system is infected in a way that affects the nerve centers of the brain. It is likewise impossible for husband and wife to maintain the highest type of emotional attitudes toward one another unless their intimate relationships are rationally guided and mutually helpful.

According to Jesus, the original intention of God in married life was that the husband and wife should become "one flesh." What, therefore, God hath joined together let not modern prudishness overlook. The physical and the spiritual are by the nature of our bodies inseparably bound together.

[1]See A. Herbert Gray, *Men, Women and God*, pp. 144-151, 160.

Modern medical science has made a pronounced advance in its knowledge of human personality by its recent discoveries concerning the ductless glands. These glands secrete and discharge into the blood certain substances which fortify the nerve centers and prepare the muscles to meet the varied and trying situations of life. It is coming to be realized that our emotional attitudes are thus powerfully influenced by the ductless glands. In turn the glands themselves are stirred into activity by external situations, particularly by pleasure and pain. Herein is the close connection of hard work, play, excitement, struggle, and love with the development of personality. When stimulating situations are lacking, when stimulation is excessive, or when there is no proper expression and satisfaction, an abnormal emotional condition results. It is scarcely possible for two individuals to live in the close intimacies of married life without being thereby profoundly affected temperamentally. It is almost useless to add that our temperamental attitudes are closely related to our spiritual attainments.

Science, therefore, is confirming and explaining the word of Jesus in declaring husband and wife to be one flesh, not to be divorced without sin. Body and soul in married life are inseparable. One flesh means social oneness. Sex, in modern civilization, comes to have a significance aside from that of reproduction. Its sane and intelligent expression creates the emotional background for the realization of the aims and attitudes

which are discussed in the earlier chapters of this book. Life is a unity. The home can no more overlook what Jesus said concerning "one flesh" than it can ignore any other teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

We must see to it, then, that sex does not cancel soul; nor soul overlook sex. Human beings differ from the rest of the animal world in their ability to control and use the appetites of the body. How different is a group of well dressed people, eating from a table that is graced with linen and china and conversing together with joy and good will, from a pen of swine, crowding each other around a trough of swill! Yet both groups are satisfying the same animal appetite. In its physical necessity the human group discovers one of its most useful social experiences. In much the same way sex becomes either bestial or elevating. Love, chivalry, and the fine art of wooing relieve it of its disgusting aspects. Intimately and instinctively a part of our nature, it must be viewed from the standpoint of the spiritual purposes of life; certainly not from the plane of the animal.

Spiritual use of animal instincts

Selfishness is the essence of sex impurity, as it is of all other sin. Men and women desire the physical satisfactions of their bodies without regard to the welfare of others or of society at large. We are beginning to see that selfishness within the family is as degrading, if not as disgraceful, as selfishness without. Without modesty, romance and reverence, all things become unclean. And

this is as true when we withhold our love from those to whom it is due as it is when we insist on our own pleasure before that of others. Some one has said that he did not wonder at what people suffered; but he was surprised at what they missed. In the words of Burns:

"I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing;
But Och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!"[2]

Humanity's most degrading practices have associated the study of our bodies with unpleasant and degrading suggestions. In one sense we share our instincts with the animals. But to the pure all things are pure; most of all, the laws of life which God has made. To use the words of Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service" (Rom. 12:1). Presenting our bodies sacrificially becomes a spiritual service. The monastic idea was that the very fact of having bodies was a detriment to spirituality. Jesus prayed the Father, "not that thou shouldest take them from the world." In the prayer that he taught his disciples he said, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Questions for Class Discussion

1. How can we make questions of sex clean and wholesome in Christian society?

[2]Robert Burns, "Epistle to a Young Friend."

2. To what extent should publicity be given to the facts of life? What happens when young folks marry without knowing them?

3. Who should instruct boys and girls concerning these facts concerning their own natures?

4. What advantages are there in the fact that it is difficult to converse frankly concerning sexual matters? What disadvantages?

5. Why does the reproductive function, which comes to us from the Creator, seem to many an unclean thing?

6. What will become of human society, if only the ignorant and the degraded reproduce their kind?

7. What consequences come to the wilfully childless home?

8. What physical qualifications should a person bring to the marriage altar?

9. What hinders the recognition of sexual difficulties in married life and sensible measures to relieve them?

10. Is the physical foundation for spiritual emotional attitudes in the home a matter of Christian concern? If not, how do you account for the fact that Christianity omits a matter of such practical importance?

11. What help do the Scriptures give in matters pertaining to sex?

There is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.—Luke 12:2.

She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Jehovah, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but will give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life.—1 Samuel 1:10, 11.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
And holy is his name.—Luke 1:46-49.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.—Galatians 6:7, 8.

All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.—1 John 2:16, 17.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.—James 1:13-15.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—Matthew 5:8.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Family and Personality

Is married life a failure? Thousands reply that it is. The tragedy of their answer is that it reflects their experience. Their marriage has been as successful as their lives. For life is a social affair, to be measured largely by its relationships. Many definitions have been given of personality. The fact is that personality can hardly be defined; it must be discovered in its varied relationships. Human beings are made for one another. If they fail as social beings they fail as human beings and as children of God. This is the tragedy of the divorce court and the unsuccessful home.

It is of little use to talk about Christian homes to those who have not the Christian motive. Living at our best is not easy, to say the least; to most of us it does not seem possible. "To will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice. * * * I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. * * * Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:18-25).

Difficulty of living life at its best

That which distinguishes a Christian is interest in

Christian projects. Jesus himself revealed the motives of his personality, when he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). Paul found deliverance in a life of sacrificial endeavor for the spread of Christianity. In Chapter IV of this book the statement is made that conversion is a shifting of the center of interest in life. The difficulty of maintaining our Christian profession is that of maintaining this new interest. What we are trying to say is that Christian projects, interest in which distinguishes a Christian from others, by the attractiveness of their mission, draw us out of our baser selves and unite us with Christ. They thus become our food and drink, as they were the Master's. Among the projects of life, used of God to make spiritual personality in individuals, there is none more hallowed or more powerful than our ideal of a Christian home.

The home as a motive

The skillful boatman knows how to make the tides assist him. Sometimes he puts his craft into the back current; sometimes into the center of the stream. In the difficult business of maintaining interest in the highest values of life the ideal of a Christian home is one of the strongest of motives. Because it takes hold of the instinctive longings of every normal human being, it can be used as few other incentives in maintaining character.

Fear as a motive has largely been abandoned by organized Christianity. Preachers seldom mention hell in

their discourses. The present-day emphasis is on love as a stronger, or at least a more permanent and reliable incentive. It is impossible to scare men and women into virtue, because it is impossible to keep them permanently afraid. Some stronger passion takes possession and fear is forgotten. The problem of virtue and vice as it has to do with the relations of men and women can never be solved by threats of foul diseases or even of public disgrace. The way out is through the Christian ideal of a home. The time has come when the Christian family, as a divine institution, should be regarded as a means of grace, a saving influence.[1]

There is no thought so fraught with power to keep individuals in the love of God as the thought of the family. When one is tempted to indulge the look, which Jesus described as adultery, there is no remedy so quick and sure as calling to one's remembrance his ideal of home. Such recollection is a powerful controller of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is of God, written by him in our instinctive nature. Few fall so low that thoughts of legitimate family life, of motherhood and childhood dependent upon us, do not automatically direct the soul upward. It is stronger than life.

Planning homes is building personality

Therefore, as we plan our homes, we unconsciously build personality. We examine our bodies. Successful married life must have clean blood and a hereditary history free from disqualifying ail-

[1]For a fuller discussion of this point see George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, pp. 224, 225.

ments. No punishment could be more bitter than to discover that we have bequeathed to our children hopeless physical or mental ailments. We make sure that no sin of ours shall rest upon our children.

We would next do well to examine our sex life; is it normal? This implies that we enjoy those impulses that give urge and meaning to marriage. In this day, when prevalent divorce gives overwhelming evidence of mismated couples, this is too often overlooked. Wedded life is more than friendship.

On the other hand, it is more than animal attraction. Normal life means normal imagination to give balance and sanity. Unbridled passion usually means one-sided emotion, which is another name for perverted instinct.[2] Other strong feelings, such as self-respect, altruism, reverence, and the like, are needed to maintain balance and self-control. Marriage for love implies capacity for unselfishness, not lust. So strong an instinct as love requires safeguards to keep it from destroying values it might establish.

To maintain normal and controlled impulses we do not arrest them. Their suppression was not intended by the Creator. To control is to direct. There are many ways in which to express natural feelings. Healthy exercise and play is one of them. Poetry, music and art give beauty. Circles of friends and social life tend toward sanity and optimism. Above all, hard work gives outlet

[2]See interesting example, quoted by A. Herbert Gray, *Men, Women and God*, p. 76.

to the central passions of our nature in a way that is at once legitimate and helpful.

The problem of personality is therefore that of keeping interested in what is worth while. We need new adventures from time to time. Legitimate excitement is helpful. New friends, new expressions of our personality and new satisfactions assist in making and keeping us personally fit. We invite the tempter to take possession, when we allow our lives to become empty of legitimate interests. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man."

Keeping interested

> "Of our vices we can frame
> A ladder, if we will but tread
> Beneath our feet each deed of shame."[3]

We need our natural impulses for the higher pursuits of life. It is comparatively easy to divert from lower to higher things, if we can only keep interested in that which is worth while. The ideal of the Christian family, kept vivid and attractive in the imagination, makes a ladder of those feelings which would without it become degrading.

But above all our efforts and through them all, is the grace of God. By grace have we been saved, not of ourselves. The Christian aim, respect for personality, reverence for God, seeking the kingdom first, the practice of prayer and

The grace of God

[3]Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Ladder of Saint Augustine."

of walking in the spirit of God, these things operate in ways that we know not. They come to light, often years later, in surprising manifestations. In making personality they make the family. Nothing of good or of evil remains hidden in the heart. When we stop to consider that a concept of the mind can start the saliva to flowing in the mouth or cause a blush to come upon the cheek, we see how true the words of Jesus are, "There is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2).

"Think not that because no man sees
Such things will remain unseen."

"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." It is more than, "Sow a thought and reap an act." It is, "Sow a thought and reap an attitude of life," an attitude that will eventually act and react on the lives of those most dear to you.

Hannah was an obscure Hebrew woman, living in a rude barbaric age. She was in the grip of petty jealousy. In the polygamous household of which she was a part she was seemingly the victim of circumstances and the urge of her own nature. But she found the way out. "She vowed a vow and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but will give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then will I give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life." Her son lived to save his people; but in the progress of his

birth and rearing Hannah saved her home from strife and her own life from bitterness.

It is impossible to imagine the Virgin Mary apart from her divine child and her mission. An unknown village maiden heard the call to become the mother of our Lord. She gave the fullness of her personality to this sacred mission. She has thereby become the most noted and influential woman of history. It was as a mother and through her home that she achieved. No wonder she breaks into song:

"He hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid;
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Her home had magnified her personality; while her personality had fitted her for the family to which God called her.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. What is the difference between a home idea and a home ideal?

2. What contribution can the individual member of a family make to its ideals?

3. What does the family contribute to its individuals?

4. What enterprises make life on the higher levels interesting?

5. What interests cheapen personality?

6. Under what circumstances would it be a sin to take no physical exercise and indulge in no recreation?

There are three things which are too wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not:
The way of an eagle in the air;
The way of a serpent upon a rock;
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea;
And the way of a man with a maiden.—Proverbs 30:18, 19.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel. And she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master: and she took her veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.—Genesis 24:63-67.

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, What damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves. So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, save that she tarried a little in the house.

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. * * * * Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my Lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken kindly unto thy handmaid, though I be not as one of thy handmaidens.—Ruth 2:5-13.

And David sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself to the earth, and said, Behold thy handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.—1 Samuel 25:39-41.

CHAPTER NINE

Courtship

The Bible has no examples of courtship in the modern sense of that term. The oriental world, in which the events of the Bible occurred, relegates marriage arrangements to the domain of business detail. When it was time for Isaac to marry, Abraham sent a servant to secure for him a bride, who should be of their kindred in Haran. Isaac never saw his wife until all arrangements had been made. The desirability of the marriage had no reference to the personal preferences of the contracting parties. It was purely a matter of family convenience and was viewed wholly from the standpoint of the parents. Such a match furnishes little guidance for modern courtship.

No Bible example

Other biblical accounts are equally far removed from our ideas of courtship. Customs and social conventions are so different that they seem to exist in another world. The nearest approach to a real love affair is the story of Ruth in the fields of Boaz. Still, no prudent mother of to-day would advise her daughter to seek a husband after the method which Naomi suggested to Ruth. Neither do we expect rising young men to do their courting after the manner that David made his approach to Abigail.

The New Testament contains no examples. Our Lord never married. No records of Christian courtship have been preserved. If the Word of God is to be of assistance, it must be through its spiritual principles rather than by example.

It is a surprising fact that only a minority of the human race have ever practiced courtship. Barbarous people purchase wives. As nations advance in civilization, parents and guardians make the arrangements. In many lands professional match makers assist. It is only where Christianity has paved the way that we find opportunity given to the young people themselves to meet freely and by personal acquaintance come to select their own mates. Manifestly the opportunity to meet and select partners for the matrimonial undertaking is an important advance in the direction of the organization of Christian family life.

Courtship modern and limited in practice

Modern courtship seems to have grown out of the chivalry of the Middle Ages. Its traditions remind us of knights and ladies, minstrels and troubadours. Originally it was the effort to discover that which is noble in the midst of rude surroundings. Chivalry represents the influence of Christianity in an age of brutality, ignorance, impurity, and violence. It raised love from the sensual and gave dignity to personality. The modern knight and lady would do well to honor themselves with a still further pursuit of this same ideal.

Does courtship have anything to do with successful marriage? Having scanned the factors entering into Christian family relationships we are prepared to ask ourselves what leads up to the physical and emotional conditions that satisfy the spirit as well as the body. When we come to contemplate what is implied in the conception of the home as the power house, where human lives come to replenish their strength, and from which they go forth to do the work of the Master, we clearly see the advantage that accrues from having these same ends in view in the preparatory steps leading to married life. Courtship exists for the sake of marriage Its success is not measured by its happiness; but by the type of home that results.

Relation to marriage

Let us sketch again the ideal that earlier chapters of our study have been building. The home, as we have said, is life's power house to equip and strengthen us for all that is worth while in the world. Its atmosphere must be that of respect for personality and reverence for God. Its dominating aim must be to make a Christian contribution to the world. This spiritual state has of necessity to be based on an intelligent use of physical surroundings and a spiritual use of the appetites and functions of our bodies. Food, sleep, clothing, exercise and recreation must contribute to something higher and more important than themselves. Occupying a central place in the strategy of family success is the ability to make the mutual attractiveness of the husband and wife

so free from vulgarity, yet so satisfactorily expressed, as to keep the home true to its divine purpose.

It is evident that courtship is concerned with the mutual discovery of the two primary personalities necessary to such a family arrangement, and the method by which they may approach it without injuring its chances of success. Like the first flight around the world, marriage must be made the great adventure; manifestly it cannot so become if the flying equipment is hopelessly ruined in its trial trip. Ideals are easily ruined. The fine and the true are not easily attained.

Marriage not certain

At the same time, let us not forget that marriage is not yet a certainty, even for the engaged. Many engagements are broken; and rightly so. When acquaintance has demonstrated that two lives will not happily unite, it is better to draw back than to turn disappointment into tragedy. Can even the intimacies of engagement be so guarded by Christians that such parties may separate, each nobler for the love which cannot go on? It will require Christian standards of conduct, without which both lives must in such cases inevitably be degraded.

How shall we make sure of our standards? Not by passive resistance to physical temptation, but by maintaining purposes that lift us above such temptation. The hunger of human beings for companionship in love is exceedingly strong; but civilization and Christianity should release us from the necessity of being the tools

of natural forces. We become superior to natural forces by comprehending their place in our lives and in God's plan. Courtship, and particularly the courtship that takes place after couples are actually engaged to be married, is the process by which young people learn by life's only real teacher, experience, this thrilling art. Too often we learn it crudely or mistakenly.[1]

Foundations of faith

The first foundation stone of a successful home is faith. As long as the members of the family can believe in each other, nothing can separate them. When faith is lacking, no amount of prosperity in other directions will atone for failure here. Once lost, faith is hard to regain. In a world of distrust it is hard to acquire. It cannot be commended. No act of will can remove distrust. Yet it is absolutely essential.

But faith in one another is closely related to the faith which each of us has in his own integrity. It is a curious characteristic of human nature that we suspect others when we are not sure of ourselves. The liar hesitates to accept the word of others; the selfish person weighs the people that he meets in the balances of self-interest. To the pure all things are pure; but to the impure every man and every woman has his or her price.

In these days of engagement for marriage the future husband and wife are building foundations for faith, not only in each other individually but in the family

[1]See A. Herbert Gray, *Men, Women and God*, pp. 32-36.

as an institution. They are laying the first foundation stone under their new relationship. Eventually its security will protect and maintain both their own spiritual attitude and that of their children. Manifestly they must believe in the sincerity of their own virtue to the end that they may believe in that of each other. This is the major reason for a fine type of relationship during courtship.

Modesty is closely related to faith. It seems to be given in the years of early adolescence to protect us from our own impulses. It continues with us in later years to refine all relationships. To retain one's sense of modesty is to retain faith in his ability for self-control. As we have seen, this faith in our own integrity carries with it similar faith in another. In proportion as we lose our finer feelings, therefore, we doubt the integrity of others. All of which has most practical and pertinent implications in courtship.

Unselfish love

In connection with faith there must be love, unselfish and sacrificial love. Courtship is also the opportunity to begin this quality of co-operative living. Love, to be Christian must be chastened and controlled. There must be an element of sanity about it. This variety of love—and unfortunately many emotions and practices have been called love—is not easy to possess, despite our easy assumption that love takes care of itself. Love, as an emotion, is closely related to animal impulses that are as strong as the desire for life. Sanity demands self-

control. Unselfishness demands restraint. These are not to be thoughtlessly acquired at a time when strong attachment is leading a willing servant to the object of desire.

Sane, unselfish love implies above all else respect for personality. Since love is impulsive, such respect for personality makes it necessary that the outward expression of love be restrained within the limits demanded by the dignity of human beings. It is exceedingly short-sighted for those who expect to spend a lifetime together to lower their regard for each other. Here in particular the remedy is not a repression of affection but a frank admission of the end in view in the home that is to be, together with a conscious effort to use the strong feelings of courtship to make that home permanently happy and satisfying.

The same sane and Christian aim will determine such courtship as takes place before engagement. In fact this season is the time of all others for men and women to be sure of themselves. It is a time when we sow the seeds of respect and reverence for the opposite sex in our own hearts. The men and women that we meet are most of them shortly to become heads of families, similar to the family which we hope to establish. They are casting about to find their relationship in such a family as that for which we ourselves are on the lookout. Where else do we more need the guidance of the Lord, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them?"

The wise man said that the way of a man with a maiden was too wonderful for him. Most of us feel the same way toward it. And yet we must realize that families grow out of courtship. And families are governed by most of the principles that govern individual lives. "As the twig is bent the tree's inclined." As courtship reveals us to each other, so we often continue to live. Here we lay the foundation of a lasting friendship. If that friendship fails, there is little hope for the home. Two lives must blend until they become as one. To do this successfully there must be no disappointment as to essentials of character. Mutual discovery is just beginning. The joy of married life has as one of its chief factors the continuance of that process of discovery along lines that allow indefinite expansion.

Mutual revelation

We must abandon the theory of the inequality of the sexes. No doubt there is diversity of function and dangers peculiar to each sex; but this is likewise true that individuals of the same sex differ from each other. God has not made us alike; but Christ has made the end of his disciples amid all conditions the same, the promotion of the kingdom of God, proper regard for our fellow beings, and above all reverence for God. There is no superior sex; nor is there any place for failure to accept responsibility, even in courtship. Attitudes assumed in the beginning are apt to continue into life. Children imbibe them from their parents and thus they go on from generation to generation. Courtship is the

time for laying the foundation for a new age. Christian democracy can never come in spirit in the world until it comes in the home. It will not come in the stress of later home life unless the unselfish love and unshakable faith for it are laid in courtship.[2]

To lose sight of character building amid the experiences of courtship is to miss the importance of it. We can ill afford to say, I am in love and therefore all other considerations cease to be significant. Many homes are being shipwrecked after but brief experience in married life. They seem to have no abiding trust, no faith to survive a few vicissitudes. The spiritual meaning of life remains all undiscovered by them. Hence life remains undiscovered. Courtship is a wonderful time for the discovery of that which is unseen by the flesh. It is fatal to allow the joy of the moment to blind our eyes to higher values.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. What principles of the Christian religion should govern professing disciples of Jesus in the days of courtship?

2. What elements in the Christian home are affected by the type of courtship practiced before its establishment?

3. To what extent should couples in American society be permitted to judge concerning the propriety of their own acts?

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[2]See George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, pp. 210-212.

4. Why does society demand a chaperon for young women?

5. Does engagement to marry carry with it freedom from such rules of propriety as apply to other couples?

6. Are long or short engagements advisable? Why?

7. What considerations should determine the length of acquaintance before engagements to marry are contracted?

8. Will marriage affect the ideals of an engaged couple?

9. What differences will their Christian profession make in the courtship of two individuals?

Let no man despise thy youth: but be thou an ensample unto them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity.—1 Timothy 4:12.

And many women were there beholding from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.—Matthew 27:55, 56.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat. But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.—Matthew 26:6-13.

The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.—John 4:9, 10.

I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. —Matthew 5:28.

Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren: the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters in all purity.—1 Timothy 5:1, 2.

CHAPTER TEN

The Home and Its Social Life

The home is a part of society at large. While its influence on the world, in which it lives, is profound, the world outside also has its influence over it. The atmosphere of the home cannot be kept separate from that of the community. Ideals and ideas of others beside ourselves come in to change us. Often our plans and customs are modified in spite of our utmost resolves to the contrary.

Mutual relations of the home and the world

This necessary contact and dependence on the world is in many respects a good thing. No home has all the culture that its members need. The school room contributes its life, the business world adds its quality, and above all the social circle in which we move has an outstanding influence. More properly we should say social "circles"; for the modern family is quite apt to have contacts with many circles through the separate members of the household.

The home must order its life with relation to these circles of influence. Loyalty to the Kingdom of God, regard for human personality, life decisions, courtship and marriage must breathe the atmosphere which happens to exist in the community where the home is located. Public sentiment cannot always be allowed to

dictate; but it cannot be disregarded. We live and move and have our being in human society. What the home itself is to its members, society is to the home.

Duty of the church

The church can have an immense influence just at this point. There is no more important function for Christianity than to provide the atmosphere of fellowship in which the families of its constituency can live their life. The business of producing proper fellowship is both sensible and scriptural. The Bible is full of statements concerning fellowship. The early church was a social society. It met from house to house. In the beginning they were accustomed to eat together. Our modern prejudice against eating in the church had no place in New Testament times. Breaking of bread was a sign of their fellowship.

Christian fellowship was most natural for the followers of Jesus, who described himself as having "come eating and drinking." Jesus attended weddings and dinner parties. Into them he led the band of his disciples. He made friends of strangers, even of publicans and sinners. He did not fear to converse with women, contrary to the social customs of his day. He had friendship with both men and women. It could hardly have been otherwise. The Son of God, who came to teach the brotherhood of man, must exemplify that brotherhood in order to commend it. His followers did the same. Fellowship in as much a part of Christianity as prayer

This, of course, means social life as a part of church life. Unless the church supplies social atmosphere to its people, they will be compelled to turn elsewhere to find it. Many commercial enterprises would be glad to furnish amusement and even society to the members of church families—for a financial consideration. Too often the financial consideration is the only consideration. Commercialized amusements as we find them, remind us of the sheep-thief, who, Jesus said, came to steal and kill and destroy. They prove deadly to the spiritual interests of those, whom they control. Like the Master, the church has as part of its mission the giving of a fellowship that will give life, and give it abundantly.

The church should have a social program for all ages of its constituency. When men and women worked long hours and found little time and strength for employment outside of their duties, the need for social life was not so noticeable But as leisure increases, the problem of its employment becomes one of the most important considerations of those forces that seek to elevate society.

Purpose of social gatherings

The purpose of social gatherings is to furnish an occasion where men and women can meet to share, not so much their ideas, as their ideals and attitudes. As we have seen in preceding chapters, these are more important than ideas. What society in general takes for granted has many times more influ-

ence than that for which we contend. The social circle comes to be a meeting place for the assumptions of those who are allowed entrance. Naturally the church is interested in these strong suggestions, continually being made to its members and its homes by somebody. Such interest should prompt a vigorous effort to make Christian attitudes of brotherliness, purity, reverence, and righteousness a part of the social life of all church members.

It is important that we should meet many people, especially different kinds of people. Nothing is more broadening than to discover personalities differing from ourselves. This makes helpful the acquaintance of men and women. They live so close to one another in the world, and at the same time are kept so apart from each other by the nature of their lives, that they have much of personal attitude to share when they meet upon the social plane.

Especially is it advisable that young people should know many friends before they become engaged to marry. The couple who have never had other sweethearts make a strong appeal to our sentimental nature; but if their complete devotion to one another was caused by the fact that youth brought them no other friends from which to choose, they were as much in the hands of fate as though some Chinese matchmaker had arranged their wedding. Particular interest is given the social circle by the fact that it is there that young

people go to discover each other and eventually to find a mate.

What should be the nature of the social life that has so much to do with the making of personality and family life? There must be much of joy; for the world needs joy. There must be relaxation and the opportunity to rest from the strain of worry. Sincere friendship, kindness and good will must be in evidence. But these are all qualities, not occupations. What shall we do at social gatherings? Quality of life will be a by-product of what happens.

Activities of social gatherings

In the social life of the modern world cards and dancing rank large. They seem to furnish a kind of amusement that is always available and for the most part interesting to those who engage in them. They have the advantage of being universally recognized in polite society as proper occupations for conventional gatherings.

The church in the past has opposed both the dance and the card table. It has done so because both seem to be associated with strong impulses that destroy character. Cards have associations with gambling, and the dance with vice. As time goes on a good deal of this opposition has weakened. In some quarters this seems to be because the church is less opposed to worldliness than it used to be. In others, because cards and dancing seem to have become less dangerous to the life of the church.

So far as cards are concerned we have little to say. There are many good games without resorting to them. On the other hand there seem to be so many games that are played with cards that their influence is not altogether on the side of gambling. No doubt the character of those who engage in such amusement will have a very important bearing on the decision as to whether cards should be permitted to touch the life of the Christian family.

Concerning the dance two views are urged. Many people of refinement and culture claim that the dance, properly conducted, is a helpful form of social occupation. In their view the music, the grace, and the exercise combine to give freedom and beauty to the gathering and provide a proper release of sex emotion. It has been recognized in the best customs of society. The so-called dangers are not inherent in the dance and would appear in any occupation, when men and women meet without high ideals.

The other view is directly opposite. The church has too long observed the effect of the dance on human society to be mistaken. Pleasure-loving worldliness, if not more serious immorality, has always been associated with dancing. A Christian cannot attend and engage without lowering his spiritual tone and compromising his influence. Instead of being a release of sex feeling it is a stimulant. From the day when Salome danced for the head of John the Baptist until the ever more degrading dances of the present the institution has always been associated with evil.

The two sides of the question are given without comment. In practice, every Christian and every home decides such matters in the light of their experience. Few change because they are told to change their attitude concerning the dance. A more important decision, after all, is whether we will put the Kingdom of God first or second in our lives. There is little danger of either cards or dancing hurting the spiritual life of those who put the Kingdom first.

The family is set in the midst of a world of competing interests. It is a far different world from that which existed a half century ago. Then there was no other gathering place than the church for friends to meet. Today the world is full of invitations to get pleasure.

The remedy for social dangers

This social world in which we live is full of danger; the more so because it is not recognized until the danger becomes a tragedy. Overwrought appeals to the love of excitement or to the sex impulse are on every hand. Picture shows and other exhibitions, fiction and the magazines, the dance, the bathing pool, and the automobile compete for our money, our time, and our affections. Meanwhile divorce statistics make us conscious that something is undermining the modern home. The "eternal triangle" is advertized on the bill boards as well as in the courts. Can we suppress it?

Suppression is a poor remedy for any ill. We must supplant. The real "eternal triangle" is not two women and one man, or two men and one woman, but yourself,

your neighbor and God. What society needs is a new ideal with God in it. To pursue every evil that manifests itself in life is an endless task. There is but one evil, the evil of leaving God out of our lives. A Christian home is under obligation to combine with other homes and make a Christian society. The normal place to do this is in the church; but do it somewhere we must. The gospel is the power of God to save the family and society at large, as it has even been to save the individual.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. What should a home do, when its members seem to be receiving un-Christian attitudes from their social circles?

2. What activities should be put into the social program of a church?

3. List the social activities that are mentioned in the Bible.

4. What considerations should move the church to give a social program to its constituents?

5. What ages should be provided for in such a program?

6. Make a list of ways in which the church can assist adults and young people of opposite sex to meet in helpful social contact.

7. To what extent is it profitable for married people to form friendships outside the home? When do such friendships become detrimental?

8. Just what advantages should be expected from friendships between men and women? What dangers?

9. What is the effect of the dance upon single young people? Upon married people?

10. How and to what extent can the home be thrown open for social fellowship?

Bibliography

Suggested Library for the Class

Religious Education in the Family, Henry F. Cope. $1.50
Education in Religion and Morals, George Albert Coe 1.75
The Science of Power, Benjamin Kidd 2.50
Men, Women and God, A. Herbert Gray..... 1.50

Other Books Referred To

Christianity and Social Science, Charles A. Ellwood. $1.75
Christianizing the Social Order, Walter Rauschenbusch 2.00
History of the Family as a Social and Educational Institution, Willistine Goodsell..... 3.00
The Training of Children in the Christian Family, Luther Allen Weigle..... 1.50
Democracy and Education, John Dewey..... 2.25
Introduction to Social Psychology, McDougall J. W. Luce Pule..... 1.75

Human Nature and Its Remaking, W. E. Hocking.$4.00
Fundamentals of Prosperity, Roger W. Babson.... 1.00
A Study of Adult Life, Theodore G. Soares..... .60
A Social Theory of Religious Education, George .. 1.75

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